

APPENDIX E



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Specific Cancers : Stomach (Gastric) Cancer : Treating Stomach Cancer

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The stages of stomach cancer



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The stage of a cancer tells the doctor how far it has spread. It is important because treatment is often decided according to the stage of a cancer.

Your scans will give some information about stage. But your doctor may not be able to tell you the exact stage of your cancer until you have surgery. If you are diagnosed with stage 4 stomach cancer, then you may not be given very detailed information as surgery will not necessarily be the best treatment option for you.

There are different ways of staging cancers. The two main ways are the TNM system and the number system. There is [more about staging cancers](#) in the CancerHelp UK section [About Cancer](#).

TNM stages of stomach cancer

'TNM' stands for Tumour, Node, Metastasis. The system can describe the size of a primary tumour, whether there are lymph nodes with cancer cells in them and whether the cancer has spread to a different part of the body.

part of the body.

There are 4 stages of tumour size in stomach cancer

- T1 means the tumour has grown no further than the inner layer of the stomach
- T2 means the tumour has grown into the muscle layer of the stomach wall
- T3 means the tumour has broken through the membrane covering the outside of the stomach
- T4 means the tumour has grown into other organs or body structures nearby such as the liver, gullet or abdominal wall

There are 3 possible stages of lymph node involvement

- N0 means there are no lymph nodes containing cancer cells
- N1 means there are cancer cells in lymph nodes that are less than 3.0 centimetres away from the main tumour in the stomach
- N2 means there are cancer cells in lymph nodes that are further than 3cm away from the main tumour in the stomach OR in lymph nodes that are connected to the main blood vessels around the stomach

There are two stages of metastasis

- M0 means there is no cancer spread to other organs
- M1 means the cancer has spread to other parts of the body

Number stages of stomach cancer

There are four main stages in this system - stage 1 to 4. Some doctors also refer to stage 0.

Stage 0 or Carcinoma in situ

If you are told you have CIS or stage 0 stomach cancer, you have a

very early stage of stomach cancer. There are cancer cells in your stomach lining. But they are contained within the lining of the stomach. So there is very little risk of any cancer cells having spread. It is not usual for stomach cancer to be diagnosed this early.

Stage one

This is the earliest stage of cancer. It is divided into 1a and 1b. Stage 1a means the cancer has grown no further than through the inner lining of the stomach, with no cancer in the lymph nodes (T1, N0, M0).

Stage 1b means either that

- The cancer has still only just grown through the lining, but nearby lymph nodes contain cancer cells (T1, N1, M0) OR
- There are no cancer cells in the lymph nodes, but the cancer has grown into the muscle of the stomach wall (T2, N0, M0).

Stage two

This means that

- The cancer has grown into the muscle layer of the stomach wall and nearby lymph nodes are affected (T2, N1, M0) OR
- The cancer has grown right through the stomach wall (T3, N0, M0)
OR
- That the cancer has still only reached the lining of the stomach but lymph nodes further than 3 cm away contain cancer cells (T1, N2, M0)

Stage three

Stage 3 is also divided into a and b.

Stage 3a means that

- The cancer has grown into the muscle layer, but lymph nodes further than 3cm away contain cancer cells (T2, N2, M0) OR
- The cancer has grown through the stomach wall, but only nearby lymph nodes contain cancer cells (T3, N1, M0) OR
- The cancer has grown right through the wall and into nearby tissues but no lymph nodes contain cancer cells (T4, N0, M0)

In stage 3b, the lymph nodes are always affected. Either

- The cancer has grown just through the stomach wall and lymph nodes further than 3cm away contain cancer cells (T3, N2, M0) OR
- The cancer has grown through the stomach wall into surrounding body tissues and nearby lymph nodes contain cancer cells (T4, N1, M0)

Stage four

Stage four stomach cancer means your cancer has either

- Grown through the stomach wall into body tissues next to the stomach and lymph nodes further than 3cm away contain cancer cells (T4, N2, M0) OR
- Spread to other body organs through the lymphatic system or bloodstream (any T or N, M1)

